

# An Exploratory Study to Determine Archetypes in the Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Industry Environment

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**Abstract:** This paper presents the findings of an empirical study among industry stakeholders on the development of the Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) Fashion Industry in the Caribbean region. This industry is one of several creative industries receiving special attention by the T&T government toward the diversification of the local economy and away from dependence on rents earned from the oil and gas industry. Q-Methodology, which forced participants to rank numbered statements relative to one another, according to their level of agreement or disagreement with each, was used. Views expressed varied from Fashion Industry Participants (FIPs) who were traditionalists, arguing for a return of the protectionist policies from the 1980s, to free market advocates. Five (5) archetypes were eventually isolated. These archetypes were termed State Led Industrial Diversification FIPs, Optimistic Traditionalists, Globalisation Attack FIPs, Westernised Red Oceaners and Powerful Global Value Chain FIPs. The limitations of the study lie in the possibility that other views may exist within the environment since the factors defining the archetypes are as valid as the list of statements, called the Q-Sample, which the participants ranked. The archetypes herein defined represent stakeholder viewpoints which should inform policy governing the development of the T&T Fashion Industry. The methods used in defining the archetypes may also be useful in the preliminary stages of exploring other industries for development.

**Keywords:** Diversification, Operant Subjectivity, Fashion Industry, Q-Study

## 1. Introduction

Researchers and technocrats have identified the need for economic diversification in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) (Furlonge and Kaiser, 2010; Dawe, 2008; Reis, 2007; Henry, 2007). This is based on the acknowledged existence of the so-called 'Dutch Disease', where sectors are left poorly developed while the state relies on rents from non-renewable extractive industries, in the case of T&T - hydrocarbon resources (Bridglal, 2013; El-Katiri, 2014). Furthermore, while the energy sector is the most important contributor to the county's GDP, it does not provide jobs for citizens in proportion to its financial contribution to the nation's economy (Hilaire, Henry and Ramlochan, 2012; Bridglal, 2013).

The Fashion Industry is one of several creative industries which the T&T government has selected for special development attention, overseen by the Creative Industries Company Limited, a state enterprise. The Fashion Industry may be defined as that creative industry which produces constantly changing designs of garments through constant innovation in response to the 'Voice of the Customer' (Öztürk, 2012). It encompasses the collection of value chain activities such as Design, Raw Material Production, Manufacturing, Sales, Marketing and Logistics, necessary for the realisation of

creative and structurally sound garments (Öztürk, 2012; Gereffi and Frederick, 2010).

Within the Fashion Industry, top-down approaches where state officials draft policy for the development of industries with little private sector involvement have received mixed reviews as to their effectiveness (Arezki, Gylfason and Sy, 2011). In many quarters, it is now generally recognised that key industry stakeholders' views should inform the policy affecting industry development (Arezki, Gylfason and Sy, 2011; Lopolito, et al., 2011). This study captures the views of key stakeholders within this industry by categorising opinions for the development of the industry locally.

## 2. Literature Review

The Fashion Industry is one of the most globalised industries in the world (Dopico and Porral, 2012; Gereffi and Frederick, 2010; Robertson and Lopez-Acevedo, 2012) due in part, to improved technology and low barriers for new participants (Dopico and Porral, 2012; Schaumberg-Muller, 2009; Şen, 2008). Most recently, there has been a market shift within the global fashion industry where popular culture has been influencing fashion trends in a similar manner to the high fashion centres of Paris, Milan, London, Tokyo and New York

City (Feitelberg, 2012; Doeringer and Crean, 2006; Kawamura, 2006; Kaiser, 2010; Bush, Martin and Bush, 2004; Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). This fact makes the possibility of a small island nation such as T&T successfully entering the global fashion industry seem more feasible, even though there are still challenges to overcome with relation to lack of economies of scale, psychological and geographical distance from major markets, and industry infrastructure (McGillivray, Naudé and Santos-Paulino, 2010).

Though T&T has performed relatively well on certain general factors necessary for developing industrial sectors, including infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health, and education (Schwab and Sala i Martin, 2013), specific interventions for the development of the Fashion sector may be necessary. Adoption of these interventions may be more effective if the design of such interventions is informed by the views of the respective stakeholders. Potential participants within the T&T Fashion Industry are diverse and may consist of designers, manufacturers, fashion models, make-up artists, event planners, media personnel and retailers, among others, which demonstrates the industry’s capability for providing large numbers of jobs (Reis, 2007). The local industry revolves around fashion designers, however the global Fashion Industry Value Chain includes enterprises engaged in activities related to raw materials, design, production, logistics/export networks, marketing, and sales and distribution. This is shown in Figure 1.



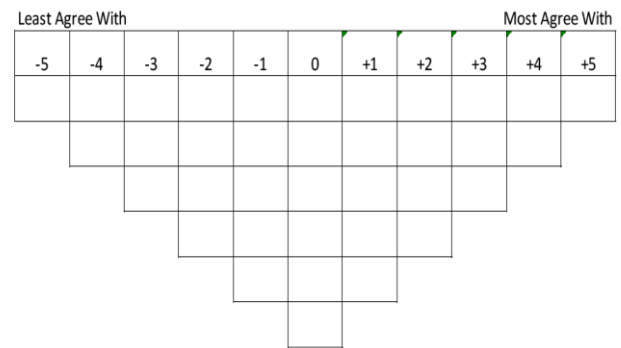
**Figure 1.** The Basic Fashion Industry Value Chain  
Source: Adapted from Gereffi and Frederick (2010)

### 3. Study Methodology

#### 3.1 Background to the Study

The Q-Study method was used to capture the viewpoints of definite stakeholders regarding the T&T Fashion Industry. The method was developed circa 1935 by physicist and psychologist William Stephenson (Watts and Stenner, 2012) and is now used in diverse fields including clinical psychology, transport policy, higher education, healthcare management, policy analysis and environmental management (Watts and Stenner, 2012).

It is considered a concise method of measuring individuals’ conscious and latent viewpoints on a topic (Carpenter and Diem, 2012). The method involves having participants arrange a set of numbered statement-containing cards, according to their level of agreement or disagreement with each. A further restriction forces the participants, termed the ‘P-Set’, to arrange the cards containing the statements collectively called the ‘Q-Sample’ or the ‘Q-Set’ consistent with a pre-determined quasi-normal distribution pattern such as the one shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Quasi-Normal Distribution Pattern

Large numbers of participants are not required for Q-Studies and valid Q-Studies may be conducted with a P-Set of one (1) (McKeown and Thomas, 2013). Examples of these would be where a researcher may seek to typify the viewpoints of a medical professional, master artist, sports star, or the president of a country. In healthcare, medical professionals may seek to diagnose complex cases with the primary physician performing the first arrangement of the cards, or Q-Sort, and another professional delivering a second opinion by sorting the same set of cards. These generally involve two (2) participants or P-Sets of two (2).

The majority of surveys conducted by scientists and social scientists today utilise the mainstream R-Method, where the sample size refers to the number of participants. Sample sizes for R-Studies are statistically determined and tend to be large since the validity of the conclusions depends on the popularity of the viewpoints among participants. The Q-Method, in contrast, recognises the collection of Q-Statements as the sample, as opposed to the number of participants, and is especially suited for exploratory studies. Close attention is paid to both the formulation of the Q-Sample and the selection of the participant(s), or P-Set. The P-Set in a Q-Study consists of individuals qualified to give an opinion on the topic, even when this happens to be just one (1) or two (2) persons. The emphasis in Q-Studies is, rather, on the Q-Sample, which must be carefully constructed to be reflective of the population of opinions which exist on the topic under study. The validity of a

Q-Study is therefore dependent on the construction of the Q-Sample.

### 3.2 The Q-Sample

Three (3) hour interviews with ten (10) peer recognised industry experts and extensive desk research led to the development of a concourse, the first step in conducting a Q-Study. The concourse consisted of a comprehensive list of statements on the Fashion Industry. This concourse was then pared to arrive at a representative list of statements on the Fashion Industry environment, the Q-Sample or Q-Set for the study. In a Q-Study, the sample has to be representative of the concourse which is considered the ‘population’ of viewpoints.

However, Q-Sets which are too large or too small create problems. When Q-Sets are too large, there are issues with the participants sorting the statements since they are required to not only rank the statements, but also sort them with respect to each other. This is a very complex process for the individual, requiring them to have intimate knowledge and definite opinions on the subject matter. Q-samples may be structured or unstructured, in the same manner in which samples in R-studies may be specially designed to be representative of various sub-groups of participants being surveyed. In this exploratory study, an unstructured Q-Set was used.

The Q-Sample consisted of thirty-six (36) statements, which was a manageable number, taking an average of about forty-five (45) minutes to sort. The Q-Sorts were then analysed using IBM® SPSS® v20 (SPSS) where the default option for factor reduction, Principal Components Analysis, was applied. The Q-Study process is outlined in Figure 3.

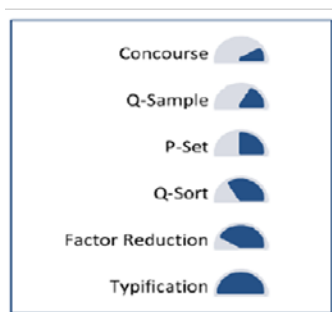


Figure 3. The Q-Study Process

### 3.3 The P-Set

The Q-Sample was sorted by twenty-five (25) participants, twenty-three female (23) and two (2) male, who were all committed to a career in Fashion Design or Fashion Management and had demonstrated this commitment by having completed or being enrolled in either a two (2) year or four (4) year formal tertiary education programme in the area. Of the twenty-five (25) participants, four (4) were relatively new to a career in Fashion. The other twenty-one participants were

experienced in different areas of the Fashion Industry such as tailoring, design, modelling, make-up, fabric design, carnival/costume design, among others. The age distribution of participants is shown in Figure 4, while experience within the Fashion Industry is shown in Figure 5. One participant did not indicate her age range.

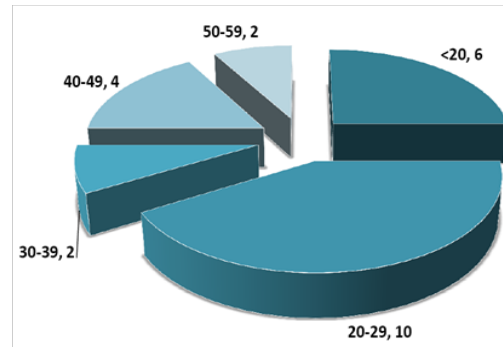


Figure 4. Age Categories and Distribution of Participants

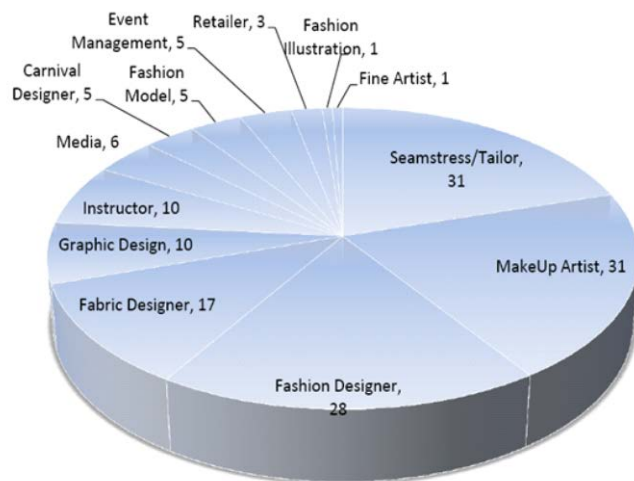


Figure 5. Total Experience in the Fashion Industry (Cum Years)

### 3.4 Analysis

The Q-Sorts were analysed using IBM® SPSS® v20. The default SPSS factor reduction method of Principal Components Analysis was applied to deliver the factors representative of the views of participants on the Fashion Industry environment. Watts and Stenner (2012) recommend the extraction of five (5) factors for Q-Studies with twenty-five (25) participants. The scree plot method requires the examination of the scree diagram generated in SPSS during factor reduction. In the scree plot method the location at which the curvature of the graph changes dictates the number of factors to extract. In this instance, the curvature changed at point number five (5), the first ‘elbow’, so in accordance with this test, and Watts and Stenner (2012), five (5) factors were extracted.

Subsequent to factor reduction of the Q-Sorts in SPSS, a factor array based on standardised scores for each item weighing significantly on factors 1 to 5 was constructed and this array was analysed to describe the five (5) archetypes existing in the Fashion Industry environment, where Factors 1 to 5 described Archetypes A to E, respectively. Confounded cases were not used in the analysis. Confounded cases were those cases which weighed significantly on more than one factor. Insignificant cases do not weigh on any of the factors defined. Isolated for special attention were items which:

- Scored at extreme ends of the scale i.e., +5, -5, +4, and -4.
- Ranked highest among all the factor arrays.
- Ranked lowest among all the factor arrays.

**4. Findings and Discussion**

Analysis of the patterns of sorting by the twenty-five (25) participants unearthed the existence of five (5) dominant viewpoints regarding the Fashion Industry environment. After careful consideration of the defining characteristics of each viewpoint, representative archetypes were defined by the researcher. These archetypes include the State Led Industrial Diversification (SLID) Fashion Industry Practitioner (FIP), Optimistic Traditionals (OT), Globalisation Attack (GA) FIP, Westernised Red Oceaners (WRO) and the Powerful Global Value Chain (PGVC) FIP (see Figure 6). The respective Q-Sorts defining these views are listed in Table 1.



**Figure 6.** T&T Fashion Industry Viewpoints

**Table 1.** Defining Q-Sorts for Factors 1 to 5

Factor	Q-Sorts	Total	Cum Total
1	4, 17, 18, 21, 24	5	5
2	6, 9, 22, 23	4	9
3	12, 13	2	11
4	1, 3, 15, 19	4	15
5	5, 7, 16	3	18
Confounded	2, 8, 11, 14, 20, 25	6	24
Non-significant	10	1	25

The actual results of the Q-Analysis with short versions of statements one (1) to thirty-six (36) from the Q-Sample are given in Table 2. References are made to the statements defining Archetype A: State Led Industrial Diversification Fashion Industry Practitioners. Archetypes B to E were analysed in the same manner based on the factor array shown in Table 2.

**Archetype A – State Led Industrial Diversification**

Participants weighing significantly in Factor 1 were termed *Archetype A – The State Led Industrial Diversification* Fashion Industry Practitioners. These individuals are the most negative [Statement 1:-5] regarding their perception of government’s commitment to developing the sector, even while arguing that it is the government’s duty to develop the sector [Statement 7:+4]. These participants recommend collaboration between private sector enterprises such as banks and suppliers with the fashion industry, in mutually beneficial ventures [Statement 3: most positive], but do not agree that private-sector led development will result in success [Statement 8:-4]. While they do not strongly agree with backward integration into textiles and fabrics [Statement 31:-1], they support diversification into unrelated industries [Statement 10: most positive], seeing opportunities for growth in supplying industries such as oil and gas, healthcare, manufacturing and hospitality and tourism, among others.

These participants are advocates of the status quo, and maintain that the focus should remain on women’s wear as opposed to children’s and menswear [Statement 13:-3]. SLIDs do not subscribe to the premise that Fashion School graduates need to intern with established players after their programme of study [Statement 9: most negative] or that local designers should target local customers [Statement 25:-4]. Finally, SLIDs are the strongest advocates for foreign owners and managers of local fashion enterprises [Statement 36: most positive]. Archetype A was therefore named based on the strong position they possess regarding the state’s responsibility in leading the development of the sector, in contrast to the other four (4) types.

**Archetype B – Optimistic Traditionalists**

The archetype defined by Factor 2 possesses the *Optimistic Traditional (OT)* view. OTs envision great potential in the T&T Fashion Industry but admit there is a need for regulation. The OT archetype holds the most negative view regarding trade barriers. They do not agree that the government should impose restrictions to foreign trade. In spite of this, participants perceive the Fashion Industry to be one with potential for contributing significantly to the country’s GDP. In accordance with the SLIDs, they are not of the opinion that the industry could be successfully developed under private sector leadership. Internships are necessary, they argue and local networks are important to the industry’s development.

Among the archetypes, the participants of this type most agree that T&T had a lucrative fashion industry in the past. They contend however, that there is need for the industry to find ways of delivering fashion items to the market at a cheaper price and that a local manufacturing base is critical, especially for young designers. They do not agree that foreign supply and

**Table 2: Factor Definition**

Item Description	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Current state support	-5	-1	-1	-5	3
2. State agencies	2	3	2	-1	-2
3. Private sector support	2	1	-1	1	-2
4. Trade restriction	-2	-3	5	0	2
5. Fashion industry potential	1	5	2	-1	-1
6. Need for regulation	2	4	4	2	1
7. State leadership	4	1	-1	-3	-4
8. Private sector leadership	-4	-5	-3	0	-1
9. Importance of internships	-1	3	1	2	2
10. Diversification into other sectors	1	-2	-3	-1	0
11. T&T can set trends	2	2	1	3	5
12. Fast fashion necessary	0	-2	-3	0	0
13. Children's and men's vs women's wear	-3	-2	-4	-4	1
14. Industry competitive/volatile	-1	1	2	4	-2
15. Demand stability	-3	0	0	-3	0
16. Impulse purchases	3	2	-4	1	1
17. T&T can control value chains	-1	0	0	0	2
18. Foreign retailer copying	-1	-1	1	0	-1
19. Events encourage piracy	-2	-3	-1	-2	0
20. Designs from T&T stand out	-2	-1	1	-4	4
21. T&T's designers global	1	0	3	-2	1
22. Industry never developed	5	-4	3	2	3
23. Local prefer cheap clothes	0	-1	4	-3	-2
24. Locals prefer 'brands'	3	0	2	3	-1
25. Local market important	-4	-1	0	2	-3
26. Locals prefer 'foreign'	1	0	0	5	-3
27. Key to success is N. American retailers	-2	2	0	3	4
28. Celebrities will 'sell' T&T's clothes	0	0	3	4	2
29. Importance of local retailers	-3	-2	0	-1	-1
30. Cheaper fashion options important	0	2	-2	1	0
31. Vertical integration – fabric	-1	1	-2	1	-5
32. Local production with good wages	0	1	-2	-2	-3
33. Local manufacturing	1	3	-2	-1	3
34. Local networks important	4	4	1	0	-4
35. Foreign networks important	0	-3	-1	1	1
36. Foreign owners/managers	3	-4	-5	-2	0

retail market networks are more important than local ones and argue against foreign owners and managers of local fashion enterprises. Finally, these participants also do not foresee much risk of designs being 'stolen' by foreign fashion retailers, or espouse the view that fashion events encourage piracy and counterfeiting. Archetype B FIPs are the most optimistic of all the types regarding T&T's potential role in the global fashion industry, however they are not ready to accept that the industry's development could be led by the private sector instead of the traditional government-led initiatives. As such, they were termed the Optimistic Traditionals.

#### **Archetype C – Globalisation Attack**

Archetype C, defined by Factor 3, holds 'The Globalisation Attack' (GA) view of the Fashion Industry. This type argues that T&T should counteract or neutralise competition by the use of trade barriers to restrict the import of clothing and that the state should play a greater role in the regulation of the industry and implementation of higher standards of quality. They are

totally against foreign owners and managers of fashion enterprises, and do not consider local manufacturing absolutely necessary. While they maintain that residents purchase foreign clothing because it is cheaper, they do not advocate for cheaper fashion products to encourage greater local sales. This stakeholder type is confident that T&T designers can design for anyone in the world, but do not see merit in designing clothing for sale into diverse industrial markets. The statements which most defined Archetype C, scoring +5 and -5 respectively, were Statements 5 and 36. Statement 5 addressed the implementation of tariff barriers to restrict imports and Statement 36 concerned the inclusion of foreign owners and managers in the local fashion industry. They were termed Globalisation Attack FIPs because of their stance that is decidedly anti-globalisation.

#### **Archetype D – Westernised Red Ocean**

Red Oceans describe the current competitive environment within an industry where the market is seen as finite and participants compete for larger shares of existing market space. The cases defining Archetype D,

Westernised Red Oceaners, do not agree with government agencies adopting a special approach in supporting the Fashion Industry. Participants of this type contend that the government is not serious about supporting the industry and they are not of the opinion that the Government of the Republic of T&T should be held responsible for its development. They are concerned about the competition existing within the global fashion industry, and do not consider T&T's designers to be exclusive in any manner. They advocate that people purchase foreign clothing because of the preference for prestigious brand names and not because it is cheaper and that having celebrities wearing local clothing is key to promoting local brands.

Archetype D is almost the anti-thesis to Archetype B, the Optimistic Traditionals. Their viewpoints define the typical Red Ocean market where competitors are forced to fight for elusive shares of competitive markets. They are further termed 'Westernised' Red Oceans because they contend that the key to achieving success may lie in market driven development of the industry by the private sector as opposed to the state. The former approach is more typical in the developed countries of the Western world in modern times.

#### **Archetype E – Powerful Global Value Chain**

Archetype E – *The Powerful Global Value Chain FIPs*, is the most positive among the types regarding the potential for the T&T fashion industry to set trends and command leadership in fashion industry value chains. Despite this, they maintain that the key to attaining success may lie in acceptance by large North American fashion retailers. They do agree with vertical integration into fabric production and do not consider local networks or markets to be important, when compared with the other four (4) types. PGVC FIPs, despite acknowledging the potential of the T&T fashion industry, maintain that the fashion industry environment demands dependence on and integration into larger, more powerful, global fashion industry networks for success.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the environment wherein the development of the fashion industry is being considered. The typification of the various viewpoints (which exist among key stakeholders) is intended for use in further research aimed at constructing a conceptual model for the T&T Fashion Industry. The Q-Study was necessary to holistically capture the views of definite stakeholders which exist in the environment without making any judgements or selection about the importance or merit of any. Researchers' or policy makers' opinions should not have undue influence over the definition of industry archetypes.

Based on the empirical findings of the study, five

(5) archetypes representing T&T's Fashion Industry Practitioners (FIPs) were defined. These include: State Led Industrial Diversification (SLID) FIPs, Optimistic Traditionalists (OTs), Globalisation Attack (GA) FIPs, Westernised Red Oceaners (WROs) and the Powerful Global Value Chain (PGVC) FIPs. All these types must be considered in the construction of a model for the development of the industry. The possibility of enriching the theories and extending the applications of creative industry development needs to be explored.

The main limitation of the study may lie in the construction of the concourse. Interviews with ten (10) industry experts and an extensive desk research were used to develop the statements that were eventually used in the study. Future research could be conducted with a concourse developed though different, or expanded means. Comparative evaluations and case studies are needed to examine the critical processes and determinants among industry practitioners and organisations across the industry sector in the Caribbean. Future research could validate the processes and determinants identified for industry practitioners towards achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Moreover, the adoption of industry archetypes and the associated concepts could be extended to different industry sectors and disciplines whereby new attributes and elements could be included.

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